

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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R 211824Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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TAGS: ETEL, PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT:SOVIET BROADCAST INTERFERENCE WITH VOA

REF: A) STATE 268866 B) MOSCOW 4049 (NOTAL)

1. AS REPORTED REF B, MFA INFORMED AMEMBASSY IN
MARCH OF SOVIET AGREEMENT TO LOWER POWER LEVEL OF
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MINSK TRANSMITTER EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 1975 IN ORDER
TO REDUCE INTERFERENCE WITH VOA TRANSMISSIONS FROM
FRG AT 1196 KHZ. WHILE SOVIETS MAY HAVE REDUCED
LEVEL AS PROMISED. EXTENSIVE MONITORING IN PAST

THREE MONTHS INDICATES MINSK TRANSMITTER CONTINUES TO INTERFERE WITH VOA 1196 KHZ TRANSMISSIONS TO POLAND AND PARTS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY AND FRG. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM MONITORS AND EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION, SOVIETS APPARENTLY HAVE COMMENCED OPERATING A SECOND TRANSMITTER ON 1196 KHZ IN WESTERN USSR BUT AT LOCATION UNKNOWN TO US.

2. RECENT LIST OF FREQUENCY REQUIREMENTS PUBLISHED BY INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (ITU) FOR LONG AND MEDIUM WAVE BROADCASTING CONFERENCE SCHEDULED TO OPEN OCT. 6 INDICATES SOVIETS ARE PLANNING SYNCHRONIZED NETWORK OF THREE TRANSMITTERS ON 1197 KHZ,

FREQUENCY WHICH WILL REPLACE 1196 KHZ IN NEW FREQUENCY PLAN. PLANNED LOCATIONS OF STATIONS ARE MINSK (50 KW), GRODNO (5 KW) AND GOMEL, SOUTHEAST OF MINSK (5 KW). WE SPECULATE ONE MIGHT ALREADY BE IN OPERATION AND BE THE SECOND STATION MENTIONED PARA 1 ABOVE. THIS THREE-STATION NETWORK WOULD CREATE EVEN GREATER INTERFERENCE WITH VOA RECEPTION.

3. AS EASTERN HEMISPHERE COUNTRY, US WILL NOT BE OFFICIAL PARTICIPANT IN ABOVE-MENTIONED ITU CONFERENCE, AND DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS IT URGENT TO COMMUNICATE USG CONCERN TO SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN STRONGEST APPROPRIATE TERMS WELL IN ADVANCE OF THAT MEETING. SINCE ORAL MFA RESPONSE REPORTED REF B SEEMED TO INDICATE WILLINGNESS TO BE COOPERATIVE ON QUESTION OF INTERFERENCE WITH VOA, EMBASSY MAY WISH TO USE THAT CHANNEL TO RAISE POINTS CONTAINED IN THIS CABLE ORALLY BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER, HOW AND TO WHOM TO PRESENT PROTEST IN WRITING.

4. EMBASSY'S VIEWS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOLLOW:

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-- A. USG APPRECIATES GESTURE OF COOPERATION REPORTED BY MFA IN MARCH, BUT MINSK TRANSMITTER IS STILL INTERFERING WITH 1196 KHZ VOA BROADCASTS INTENDED FOR THIRD COUNTRIES.

-- B. USG VIEWS WITH PARTICULAR CONCERN SOVIET PROPOSAL TO ITU FOR USE OF 1197 KHZ BY NETWORK OF THREE TRANSMITTERS.

-- C. USG IS EXAMINING QUESTION OF WHETHER THESE ACTIONS CONSTITUTE INTENTIONAL INTERFERENCE WITH VOA BROADCASTS TO THIRD COUNTRIES. THE USG WOULD

VIEW SUCH INTERFERENCE AS A SERIOUS MATTER CONTRARY
TO THE SPIRIT OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVED
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

-- D. IN CALLING THE 1196 KHZ PROBLEM TO THE ATTEN-
TION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, THE USG HOPES THAT THE
SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL CEASE ALL OPERATION ON 1196
KHZ IN THE WESTER; USSR AND HITHDRAW THE REQUIREMENT
FOR USE OF 1197 KHZ IN THE NEW FREQUENCY PLAN. THE
USG BELIEVES THAT SUITABLE REPLACEMENT FREQUENCIES
CAN BE FOUND BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES WITH LITTLE
DIFFICULTY. THE USG HAS BEEN BROADCASTING VOA
PROGRAMS ON 1196 KHZ SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 1949; THE

SOVIETS DID NOT START USING IT IN THE WESTERN USSR
UNTIL THE EARLY 1970'S. KISSINGER

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